(ii) The scheme was closed on 31.01.2005.

(iii) All the eligible employees were relieved from rolls of company *w.e.f.* forenoon of 01.04.2005.

Salient features of VRS-2004

(i) All non executive employees who have completed the age of 40 years or had served MTNL continuously (including the service rendered in DOT) as a regular employee for 20 years were eligible.

(ii) The VR optees were entitled for VR compensation equivalent to 60 days salary (Basic+DA) for each completed year of service or salary for number of years/months left till the date of superannuation, whichever is less.

(iii) In addition all the optees were also entitled for normal retirement benefits as per company rules.

(iv) Medical benefits as per company rules.

(c) Total 2056 number of employees opted for this scheme.

(d) The VR scheme introduced by MTNL was as per DPE guidelines. The terminal benefits offered by MTNL was maximum, permissible under such guidelines.

(e) Does not arise in view of (d) above.

Waiting-list of telephone connections

1679. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of persons in the country in the waiting list for telephone connections as on 1st January, 2005;

(b) the number thereof in the rural areas and the urban areas separately;

(c) by when telephone connections are likely to be provided to all persons in the waiting list;

(d) whether it is proposed to give Wireless in Local Loop (W.L.L.) telephone connections in rural areas; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and

(b) As on 01.01.2005 a total 1761156 persons were on the waiting list for telephone connections. Of this total 1348624 were in the rural and 412532 in the urban areas respectively.

(c) The demand for telephone connections is an ongoing process, however, existing waiting list is likely to be cleared by December, 2006.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. As on 31.10.2005 the total number of telephone connections on Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) in rural areas were 13.5 lakh. During the year 2005-06, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has planned to provide 837000 lines of Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) telephone connections in rural areas.

Website for information on countries of the world

†1680. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to create a website for providing information pertaining to our country and other countries of the world;

(b) whether it has been also decided to launch the above site in Hindi and other regional languages; and

(c) if not, the reasons taken to provide the benefit of this facility to the far flung areas and rural areas of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) Government has established an India portal which is envisaged as an unified portal for accessing information in the Government Sector (Executive, Judiciary, Legislature and Constitutional Authorities), for electronic delivery of citizen services and as a major facilitator for implementing e-governance initiatives. This portal will have facility to support Hindi and other regional languages. This project is being implemented by the National Informatics Centre and the content is provided by the individual Ministries/Departments and State Governments.

Opening of new Post Offices in rural areas

1681. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.